Two more dams in the pipeline

PUB studies Punggol and Serangoon rivers

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TODAY EXCLUSIVE

BARELY four months after the Public Utilities Board (PUB) revealed massive plans to turn the Marina basin into Singapore's 15th reservoir, yet another project to ensure Singapore moves towards water self-sufficiency has been undertaken.

Today has learnt that the PUB has already begun an in-depth study into the damming up of two rivers — Sungei Punggol and Sungei Serangoon — that lie in the north-eastern part of Singapore.

The damming of both the rivers (see map) will help the PUB tap on the north-east water supply and be part of Singapore's aim of ensuring its long-term water supply. The project is due to be completed by 2009 and over the last few months, PUB engineers have been making various study trips to assess its viability.

Environmentalists who have been in talks with the PUB revealed that plans are also underway to dam up three other rivers — Sungei Khatib Bongsu, Sungei Simpang Kiri and the Sungei Seletar.

In response to queries, a PUB spokesman said: "The Seletar-Serangoon Reservoir Scheme involves the development of reservoirs downstream of the existing Lower Seletar Reservoir to tap run-offs from the north-eastern coast of Singapore as a source of water supply.

"Various studies are in progress and are expected to be completed in 2005. Under the scheme, Sungei Punggol and Sungei Serangoon are expected to be converted to reservoirs by 2009."

She said that the cost of the project could only be ascertained once the studies are complete in 2005.

Once the two rivers are dammed, they are expected to be connected to the Lower Seletar Reservoir.

Mr Eric Low, the chief executive officer of the Marina Country Club and Resorts — the former Punggol Marina — dismissed suggestions that the area will become dead once the two rivers are dammed up.
Currently, sea sport enthusiasts can be seen skiing and wakeboarding in the rivers.

Said Mr Low: "I think it is good because after the area is dammed up, the PUB will ensure they are always clean and pristine.

The announcement by PUB over the Seletar-Serangoon Reservoir scheme comes months after the PUB announced a tender to turn the Marina Basin into a reservoir.

The Marina reservoir boasts of an advanced membrane technology that will make the water that flows into it as pristine as that from protected reservoirs like MacRitchie. That technology is expected to be used again in the damming of the two north-eastern rivers.

The Marina Reservoir and the Seletar-Serangoon Reservoir scheme will be ready for use by 2009, after the water has settled, some two years before Singapore's first water contract with Malaysia expires.

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